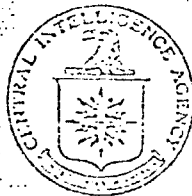


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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE CRISIS
USSR/CUBA

Information as of 0600

25 October 1962

SUMMARY CONTENTS

I. No change has been noted in the scope or pace of the construction at the IRBM and MRBM missile sites in Cuba. Cuban armed forces continue their alert.

There are indications that known and suspected saboteurs are being rounded up.

II. As of 0600 EDT at least 14 of the 22 Soviet ships which were known to be en route to Cuba had turned back. Five of the remaining eight are tankers. Two of the dry cargo ships not known to have reversed course are carrying non-military cargo.

Changes in course appear to have been executed on 23 October, before the President signed the proclamation establishing the quarantine.

III. We still see no signs of any crash procedure in preparation to increase the readiness of Soviet armed forces. The media are playing up Khrushchev's 24 October statement that he would consider a top-level meeting "useful."

IV. There is as yet no reaction to the turn-around of Soviet shipping, which had not become publicly apparent. Attention remains centered on neutralist efforts in the UN to find machinery for easing tension. Canada has searched for a Cuban airliner flying from Prague to Havana. Latin American countries are beginning to offer military units for the quarantine, and there is generally little adverse reaction in the hemisphere.

Free World press representatives in Cuba!...

[from Havana] report the city to be calm and the atmosphere relatively normal. Reports reflect none of the confusion and disorganization that accompanied the general mobilization just prior to the April 1961 invasion.

[One source reported] that Cuban newspapers and radio stations deleted the portion of President Kennedy's 22 October speech referring to offensive missile bases in Cuba.

Actually, at least one radio broadcast did refer to the President's statements about offensive bases in Cuba, which it strongly denied. This was an early reaction to the speech. Commentaries after the 23 October speech by Fidel Castro have followed the line he established. He denied that any offensive weapons are in Cuba and did not once use the word missiles.

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II. SOVIET SHIPPING TO CUBA

Information available as of 0600 hours EDT indicates that at least 14 of the 22 Soviet dry cargo ships and tankers which were en route to Cuba on 23 October have altered course and are now returning to Soviet ports. Although all the Soviet vessels may eventually turn back, the five tankers and three of the dry cargo ships appear to be continuing toward Cuba.

There is no indication at this time of any grouping of ships to form a convoy.

The BELOVODSK, one of the dry cargo ships which may still be en route, appears to be carrying non-military cargo. Another--the E. PUGACHEV--en route from the Soviet Far East and due to transit the Panama Canal on 2 November, probably also is transporting civil cargo. No information on the third dry cargo ship--the KASIMOV--has been received since 21 October.

The tanker nearest Cuba--the BUCHAREST--appeared to stop shortly before entering the US quarantine zone, but now is proceeding toward Cuba. Another tanker--the GROZNY--about two days behind the BUCHAREST, also slowed down considerably, but it too now is again heading toward Cuba.

Two of the dry cargo ships which have turned back were nearing waters north of Puerto Rico when they changed course on 23 October, but they now are back in mid-Atlantic. One ship left the Baltic Sea on 23 October and returned on 24 October. Another was not less than a day out of the Baltic Sea when it turned around and re-entered.

The course changes of those ships which have turned back were executed around noon EDT on 23 October.

The ships turned around well before President Kennedy signed the proclamation establishing a quarantine zone around Cuba. Thus far no Soviet ships have entered the zone since it was established. Only two Soviet ships--one a tanker--have arrived in Cuba since 23 October and both of these were well within the zone prior to its establishment.

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The East German passenger ship VOELKERFREUNDSCHAFT was en route to Cuba on 20 October with some 500 passengers. *(It will probably arrive in Havana between 23 and 30)* October and is due to enter the quarantine zone about 26 October. The Czech dry cargo ship KLADNO is also in the Atlantic and may be en route to Cuba with a cargo of miscellaneous non-military goods. Its position and current course are unknown.

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III. THE SITUATION IN THE BLOC

We have noted the following Soviet military developments; an assessment of their significance will be issued by the USIB Watch Committee. We find no indication of significant movements or deployments in the bloc military forces...]

Khrushchev's 24 October statement that he would consider a "top-level meeting useful" is front paged by Soviet newspapers and has been carried on both Moscow domestic broadcasts and TASS. At least one Soviet commentary beamed to North America has quoted from the Soviet Premier's message to Bertrand Russell in urging the US to be reasonable on the Cuban issue. Except for these references, however, there has been no further Moscow emphasis on the urgency of a heads of government meeting....

Moscow continues to skirt the issue of specific retaliatory action against the US. Yesterday's Izvestiya maintained the Soviet charge that the US is obsessed with the idea of some "mythical threat from Cuba."

Soviet Defense Minister Malinovsky today reiterated the USSR's position that the Soviet armed forces now are in a state of "highest battle readiness," and declared that at the "first signal all the might of all our armed forces must be brought into immediate action against the enemy."

In the first public treatment of the Sino-Indian border clashes, the USSR, in endorsing Peiping's proposals to resolve the dispute, contrasted the Bloc's willingness to negotiate such problems with the "aggressive actions of the US aimed at Cuba and the whole world." Soviet commentary to its home audience continually refers to the "false allegations" of the US concerning Soviet offensive rockets. These broadcasts are again citing the 11 September Soviet contention that the USSR has no need for missile sites outside its own territory.

Reports from Soviet officials provide no firm evidence as to future Soviet intentions. A Czech official in Vienna has reportedly taken the line that there will be lengthy discussion at the UN. The Polish ambassador to Austria dismissed as "ridiculous" a suggestion that the situation might lead to war. On 24 October a Soviet diplomat in Washington stated that Soviet ships had been ordered to proceed to Cuba.

East European satellites are continuing their warnings against any direct US intervention in Cuba. Hungary

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and Rumania now have issued statements in full support of the 23 October Soviet statement and have urged effective UN action to dissuade the US from its "warlike action." Tito has also called for UN intervention. Poland charged that US aggression was being planned at the very time negotiations on "most urgent international problems" were already in progress. Albania, in its first monitored commentary on the situation, has charged the US with "preparing another aggression against Cuba" but failed to mention the formal Soviet statement. Soviet Foreign Minister Gromyko in an impromptu speech yesterday in East Berlin, omitted any reference to the Cuban situation. His remarks on the German situation--the first direct commentary by a high Soviet official on this issue since the President's address on Cuba--contained no hint of retaliatory measure against the Western position in Berlin. While he reiterated standard Soviet themes on the necessity for the Western powers to withdraw their "occupation troops" from Berlin, he repeated his conviction that an agreement is possible.

Communist China's first official reaction to the crisis was contained in a government statement of 25 October expressing "great indignation" at the "serious war provocation" of the US. Peiping declared it would wage a "resolute struggle" against the US action, but gave no indication that it is planning any specific countermoves. The Chinese referred briefly to the 23 October Soviet statement on Cuba, and expressed full support for Moscow.

There is no observable reaction as of 0600 EDT to the diversion of most Soviet shipping from courses for Cuba, apparently because the fact has not yet become known. As a result, the UN remains the principal arena for developments.

Neutral nation representatives in New York continued their search yesterday for means of lowering tension, and after consulting their governments overnight, are planning to meet again at about 0830 or 0900.

A joint UAR-Ghana resolution requesting the principal to refrain from actions which might aggravate the situation failed to win widespread support. During the late afternoon, following a USUN briefing of African nations, the Malayan ambassador stated he saw a significant change toward greater "realism" in African attitudes. He reported this would be reflected in a new draft of the UAR-Ghana resolution now being prepared. The UN Security Council debate was limited to several expressions of support for the United States and a Romanian statement supporting the Soviet resolution condemning the United States.

During the evening, U Thant addressed appeals to President Kennedy, Premier Khrushchev, and Cuban leaders. He requested suspension of the blockade, halting of arms shipments to Cuba, and a peaceful attitude on the part of Cuba itself. President Kennedy's reply to U Thant sent in the early morning hours of 25 October, has as yet elicited no reaction.

Official and unofficial expressions of support, sympathy, or understanding for the US position on Cuba--either overtly or privately expressed by government leaders--have reached an impressive volume from all parts of the world. Nations from which such expressions have recently been received are Austria, Portugal, Luxembourg, Ireland, Syria, Iran, India, Thailand, Congo (Brazzaville), Sudan, Jamaica, and Panama. Among the very few nations or groups expressing open opposition to the US stand was the Algerian National Liberation Front, which termed the blockade of Cuba "an intolerable interference in the internal affairs of that country." An official Iraqi statement also says the US blockade is a "flagrant violation of the principle of freedom of the international seas" and a "regression for the organization of international society."

In response to a US request that governments prevent landings or overflights of Soviet aircraft carrying military cargoes to Cuba, the Sudanese Foreign Minister said any Soviet request for military overflights or for transport flights carrying military equipment would be denied, as would any request for "commercial" flights beyond Khartoum. Libya indicated it would not grant overflights to Cuba either directly or via South America. The Moroccan Foreign Secretary confirmed that a proposed air agreement with the USSR had not yet been signed and that his government would "try to do something." The Foreign Minister of Senegal stated that, according to a cabinet decision, Dakar would be closed for military use by either side. The government of Jamaica will not grant regular landing or overflight rights to Soviet aircraft bound for Cuba.

An Air Cubana plane coming from Prague made a technical stop at Goose Bay, Labrador, on 23 October, and was searched by Canadian authorities before being allowed to continue to Havana. Two East German missile technicians and five Czech technicians were on board.

Prime Minister Diefenbaker, though publicly welcoming the US decision to take the Cuban issue to the UN Security Council, has refused to be pinned down by opposition spokesmen as to whether his government will give full support to US policy on Cuba.

The press generally supports US moves regarding Cuba but offers some criticism of the US for acting unilaterally and sees very serious dangers in the situation.

The British government has emphasized its support for the US position and ordered support in the United Nations, but public opinion remains somewhat skeptical and the press keeps up a critical tone. Gaitskell has privately told US officials he is concerned over Washington's unilateral action and personally doubts that the USSR has aggressive designs against the American mainland.

In Latin America, military support for the quarantine action has been offered by Argentina, Guatemala, Peru, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, and Honduras. Enthusiastic backing for the US position is reported among the Chilean armed forces, particularly on the part of air force officers. The Argentine government has offered two destroyers on three days' notice, with a submarine, a marine battalion with transport, and other units if required later. The Argentine air

force commander has sent messages to General Lemay and other hemisphere air force commanders pledging readiness to participate in any joint measures required by the Cuban crisis.

The Peruvian offer is qualified by a requirement of unanimous OAS approval. The Uruguayan government, according to press reports, has now decided to support the OAS resolution, but with certain reservations on the use of armed force.

President Duvalier of Haiti and President Rivera of El Salvador have announced support for the quarantine policy.

Demonstrations of opposition remain scattered and ineffective. The Communists appear reluctant to commit themselves to a major effort in the face of widespread official and public acceptance of the US position.